

and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 279 Ex.]

YEAS—61

Alexander	Grassley	Reed
Barrasso	Hassan	Roberts
Bennet	Hawley	Romney
Blackburn	Hoehen	Rubio
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Braun	Inhofe	Schatz
Brown	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Jones	Scott (SC)
Carper	Kaine	Shelby
Cassidy	Kelly	Sinema
Collins	Kennedy	Sullivan
Coons	King	Tester
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Leahy	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Manchin	Warner
Daines	McConnell	Whitehouse
Durbin	Moran	Wicker
Feinstein	Murkowski	Young
Gardner	Murphy	
Graham	Peters	

NAYS—25

Baldwin	Heinrich	Shaheen
Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Smith
Booker	Markey	Stabenow
Cantwell	Menendez	Udall
Cardin	Merkley	Van Hollen
Casey	Murray	Warren
Cortez Masto	Rosen	Wyden
Duckworth	Sanders	
Gillibrand	Schumer	

NOT VOTING—14

Blunt	Fischer	Perdue
Burr	Harris	Portman
Cruz	Hirono	Risch
Enzi	Loeffler	Rounds
Ernst	Paul	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 25.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Beth Harwell, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2024.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I first went to meet with the then-Republican nominee for President of the United States, Donald Trump—that was October of 2016. I was really struck by his commitment.

It was kind of an interesting meeting. It was in the Trump Tower, and they had 10 people. Ten of us were meeting, each one in one particular area of expertise, supposedly. We had people there on energy. We had one on healthcare. I was there for the military. And I was very honored to be the one to advise him as to some of the issues and to talk about that.

The thing that surprised me is his commitment at that time to listening. You have to keep in mind, here is a guy who has been a giant in the industry

for many, many years, but he has never had anything to do with politics or government, really. So it was a learning experience for him, and he was actually listening. That was not his reputation, but he was doing it.

I remember he—we had a lot of questions that we asked and comments were made. Our conversations that day started a very strong friendship that I had with the one who would become President Trump. The President was listening closely. He asked good questions. Our conversations that day started a strong friendship, where I have been honored to offer him friendship, advice, and guidance in the area of the military, and I think it serves him well.

One good example of one of the areas where he was listening to me, against the advice of many of the people in his administration, was on the issue of Ligado. The President's advisers were trying to convince him to go ahead with the deal to sell off the GPS-adjacent spectrum; that it was a good thing and so forth. I talked to the President and made it very clear that allowing the Ligado deal to move ahead would jeopardize our Nation's GPS system, impacting not just the military and commercial aviation but farmers who rely on GPS to maintain fields and so many more. The results would be devastating, not to mention costly. The President got it, and we worked together on that issue.

I remember telling him how that happened. The FCC—the Federal Communications Commission—they were to issue and to give a spectrum to Ligado at that time. We were in recess, so I went to them, and I said: Don't do anything until we get out of recess so we can be in on this. There was a lot of objection to Ligado. So without listening to me, the FCC just went ahead and did it—on a weekend, I might add. It had never happened before. They never did it on a weekend before, but they did in this case. And they gave the order to Ligado.

Now, the interesting part of this was—this had to do with protecting our low-band spectrum from interference. It has nothing to do with good work the administration has made to make the bands of spectrum available to further our 5G development. That was all there. But that is how this happened.

The largest group I have seen ever come together in the years I have been in the House and the Senate on one issue was this issue—and I am talking about everyone. You had not just DOD and almost every bureaucracy but the airlines, the Farm Bureau, and everybody else. They were all in on this thing.

The President made the comment. He said: You know, anytime you are dealing with a bureaucracy and they tell you that something has to be done, and it has to be done on a weekend, has to be done at night, then you know something is wrong with it. Well, they rushed into it before they had the op-

portunity to do it with everyone being present at the time. But that is just another example of how close we were.

Another example was the Space Force. He wanted to do the Space Force, and I understand that. I was not, initially, all that concerned about it and supportive of it. But, on the other hand, you have countries like China and Russia—our main opposition out there—they have their space forces. And I think it is really good that we consolidated all of our efforts. We were really working well by consolidating that thing. We did that, and we did that together. That was one of the areas where we worked together.

I remember another one was the area of Western Sahara. It is something I have been on the floor talking about now for the last couple of weeks because Western Sahara has been—we have had the same position with Western Sahara since 1966; that is, they were rejected from their land in that area of the world, way back during the colonial days. In fact, at that time, it was the Spanish Sahara. We were devoted, at that time, for a right of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

I explained that to the President. At that time, he didn't have a lot of interest. He didn't know where Western Sahara was. He didn't really have a lot of interest in that. But then he did, and he became committed to the idea that we have had a policy for over 30 years in our country that we would recognize their right of self-determination. So he went along with that.

We tried to convince him this year's National Defense Authorization Act, as someone had told him or advised him wrongly—I am talking about maybe some of the people in the President's administration—that somehow the NDAA—now, the NDAA has now been passed by the House; it has been passed by the Senate; and it is going to be signed into law eventually. The President has talked about he might veto it, having something to do with that it wasn't strong enough against China. I want to get it on the record right now on the Senate floor and make sure everyone understands that this is the toughest thing on China. Well, in fact, it is not just me saying it. The American Enterprise Institute, which is sometimes referred to as the conservative voice of government, said that this bill, the NDAA of this year, the one that we passed, we just passed, is the toughest bill on China in 20 years.

Here is why. The national defense strategy—now, this is the book. We have to remember, this is something we need to adhere ourselves to. This was put together by 12 of the most knowledgeable people in America—six Republicans, six Democrats. They got together. This is providing for our defense for the future. It is a short book, but it is one that we have been living by. And they are very specific in their strategy as to where China is.

So last week, President Trump's Director of National Intelligence said